

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

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DRAFTED BY: S/S:FORTIZ:AL

APPROVED BY: S/SKFORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 022523

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BELGRADE 485 ACTION SECSTATE 24 JAN

QUOTE

S E C R E T BELGRADE 485

NODIS

PASS ALSO TO WHITE HOUSE FOR SCOWCROFT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, YO, UR, AO

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY MINIC

1. LAST NIGHT JANUARY 23 I HAD TWO HOUR MEETING WITH
FOREIGN SECRETARY MINIC. PASSED BOTH MESSAGES (REFTELS).
I INDICATED THAT THE DECISION ON TWO REFLECTED THE
PRESIDENT'S AND THE SECRETARY'S COMMITMENT EXPRESSED
HERE IN BELGRADE AND BY THE SECRETJOY IN WASHINGTON
IN SEPTEMBER TO PERSONALLY REVIEW MILITARY SALES
QUESTIONS.

2. MINIC RESPONDED THAT THE TOW DECISION WAS VERY
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GOOD NEWS INDEED AND HE PARTICULARLY EXPRESSED HIS

GENUINE AND WARM THANKS TO THE SECRETARY. HE ALSO SAID THAT GOY HAD BEEN CONFIDENT THAT WHEN PRESIDENT FORD SAID HE WOULD PERSONALLY LOOK INTO THE MATTER OF MILITARY SALES IN BELGRADE THAT HE WAS THE KIND OF MAN WHO WOULD FOLLOW THROUGH. HE NOTED THE SECRETARY HAD PROMISED A DECISION IN TWO WEEKS IN SEPTEMBER BUT HE UNDERSTOOD HOW DIFFICULT A QUESTION THIS WAS. I EMPHASIZED IN PARTICULAR THE SERIOUSNESS OF TAKING FOUR LAUNCHERS OUT OF EXISTING U.S. ARMY ASSETS AND MINIC INDICATED HE UNDERSTOOD THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUCH AN ACTION.

3. HAVING ALREADY HEARD PRIOR TO MEETING WITH MINIC THAT GOY WAS UPSET AT THE TENOR OF NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS ON THE TOW DECISION, I INITIATED DISCUSSION ON THAT ISSUE BY SAYING WE UNDERSTOOD THEIR CONCERN ABOUT IDENTIFYING THE SOVIETS AS A LIKELY ENEMY AND USG WOULD NOT DO THAT BUT THAT WE, OF COURSE, WERE PREPARED TO SELL TWO MISSILES TO YUGOSLAVS BECAUSE IT WAS IN OUR INTEREST TO DO SO AND THERE WAS NO WAY OF PREVENTING NEWSPAPERMEN FROM SPECULATING AS TO WHY IT WAS IN OUR INTEREST. MINIC HAD BEEN PREPARED TO LAUNCH INTO A DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT AND PROMPTLY DID SO. HE INDICATED THERE HAD BEEN ONE THEORY IN THE FOREIGN SECRETARIAT (STARCEVIC) THAT THE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS WERE DESIGNED TO TORPEDO THE DECISION BUT THAT GOY DECIDED TO QTE WAIT AND SEE. UNQTE HE INDICATED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE ANY ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DECISION COUCHED IN TERMS OF OUR DESIRE TO HELP YUGOSLAVIA AND OTHER NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT GOY DOES NOT WISH US TO FINGER YUGOSLAVIA AS A PARTICULARLY EXPOSED AND DANGEROUS PLACE IN THE WORLD. MINIC ALSO INDICATED THAT OTHER NON-ALIGNED FRIENDS, (INDIA, HAD RAISED QUESTIONS AS TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS TRANSACTION, IN PARTICULAR WHETHER GOY WAS REALLY SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SOVIETS AND WHETHER TOW PURCHASE REFLECTED A TILT TOWARD U.S. IN THEIR NON-ALIGNED POSTURE. I RESPONDED THAT IN OUR PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND IN OUR STATEMENTS TO CONGRESS WE WOULD

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KEEP GOY SENSITIVITIES IN MIND BUT I AGAIN REITERATED IT WAS NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN WHY SUCH A SALE WAS IN THE AMERICAN INTEREST.

4. MINIC CONCLUDED THIS PART OF THE DISCUSSION BY SAYING THAT THIS DECISION REMOVES A QTE BURDEN UNQTE ON OUR RELATIONSSHIP. HE POINTED OUT FOR YEARS THEY HAVE HAD DIFFICULTY EVEN GETTING SPARE PARTS

FOR EQUIPMENT AND THAT THIS DECISION FORESHADOWED
A NEW ATTITUDE BETWEEN OUR TWO MILITARY ESTABLISH-
MENTS.

5. I THEN REFERRED TO THE OVER-FLIGHT QUESTION AS
A MATTER CONSTITUTING A BURDEN ON OUR RELATIONS
FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW. MINIC SEEMED CONSIDERABLY
NON-PLUSSED AT OUR UNEQUIVOCAL RESPONSE TO MOJSOV
DISCUSSION WITH ME. HE WAS CLEARLY AWARE OF OUR
DISCUSSION AND REITERATED MOJSOV'S STATEMENTS ALMOST
VERBATIM, EMPHASIZING (A) THERE WAS NO AIRLIFT, (B)
SOVIETS HAVE NOT REQUESTED CLEARANCE FOR MILITARY
PLANES AND (C) ONLY A NORMAL NUMBER OF
CIVILIAN PLANES, ACCORDING TO GOY INFORMATION, HAD
OVERFLOWN YUGOSLAVIA DURING THE PERIOD WE DESCRIBED.
HE THEN WENT ON TO RUEFULLY CONCEDE THAT WE MUST
HAVE MUCH MORE SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT AND POINTED
OUT THAT IF THEY HAD ACCESS TO THAT EQUIPMENT THEY
COULD ENQUIRE FURTHER. HE THEN WENT ON TO SAY
SINCE THEY WERE SUPPORTING MPLA IF THEY
HAD PERMITTED OVERFLIGHTS THEY WOULD HAVE OPENLY
ADMITTED IT AS THEY DID DURING THE MIDDLE EAST WAR.
HE POINTED OUT THAT OUR UNEQUIVOCAL RESPONSE PUT
HIM IN A DIFFICULT POSITION SINCE HE HAD ALREADY
GONE TO THEIR QTE AUTHORITIES UNQTE AND THEY HAD HAD ANOTHER
IMPRESSION AND HAD NO WAY TO INDEPENDENTLY VERIFY
OUR CONTENTION. I RESPONDED THAT WE HAD OBVIOUSLY
NO INTEREST IN GIVING THEM ANYTHING BUT ACCURATE
INFORMATION AND THEY OUGHT TO BE DAMNED CONCERNED
IF A FOREIGN POWER WAS CAPABLE OF MILITARY OVER-
FLIGHTS WITHOUT DETECTION.

6. MINIC LAUNCHED INTO A GENERAL DISCUSSION ON ANGOLA,
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EMPHASIZING THAT (A) THEY HAD BEEN SUPPORTING THE
MPLA FOR TEN YEARS, (B) ANGOLA WOULD SURELY BE NON-
ALIGNED, (C) OUR POLICY WAS PUSHING THEM INTO DEPENDENCE
ON THE SOVIET UNION. HE WENT ON TO CLAIM THE AFRICANS
BELIEVED THAT WE WERE SUPPORTING THE SOUTH AFRICANS
WHO ARE A MAJOR MILITARY POWER WHOSE CAPACITY
THREATENS ALL OF BLACK AFRICA. I REITERATED OUR
POSITION AGAINST ALL INTERVENTION AND POINTEDLY ASKED
MINIC WHETHER HE SUPPORTED THE STATEMENT OPPOSING
ALL INTERVENTION BAKARIC HAD MADE TO CODEL MORGAN.
MINIC RESPONSE WAS QTE ABSOLUTELY UNQTE. I THEN
ASKED WHY THEY DID NOT PUBLICLY
EXPRESSED THAT VIEW AND HE LAUNCHED INTO AN ARGUMENT
THAT SOUTH AFRICANS SHOULD WITHDRAW FIRST AND
AFTER THAT NETO WOULD HAVE NO NEED FOR OUTSIDE

SUPPORT. I RESPONDED BY TELLING HIM IT WAS THE CHICKEN AND EGG QUESTION AND THAT THE ONLY APPROPRIATE AND RESPONSIBLE POSITION FOR NATIONS CONCERNED ABOUT OUTSIDE INTERVENTION IN AFRICA WAS TO PUBLICLY OPPOSE ALL INTERVENTION AND TO URGE ALL OUTSIDE INTERVENORS TO IMMEDIATELY GET OUT OF ANGOLA. IN RESPONSE TO HIS DISCUSSION ABOUT THE "NON-ALIGNED" POSITION, I POINTED OUT THAT NON-ALIGNED NATIONS IN AFRICA HAD SPLIT ON THIS ISSUE. I PARTICULARLY POINTED TO EGYPT'S POSITION. THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY A SORE SPOT WITH MINIC WHO IN IRRITATED TONE EMPHASIZED THAT THEY WERE IN CONTACT WITH THE EGYPTIANS AND THAT TWO COUNTRIES SIMPLY DO NOT AGREE ON THIS QUESTION.

7. WITH RESPECT TO ZAIRE, MINIC SAID THEIR INFORMATION INDICATED THERE WAS DISSATISFACTION INSIDE THAT COUNTRY BECAUSE OF MOBUTU POLICY AND THAT PEOPLE IN ZAIRE AS WELL AS OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES WERE CONCERNED ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA. I RESPONDED THAT IT WAS NOT SOUTH AFRICAN PLANES THAT HAD RECENTLY BOMBED ZAIRE AND IT WAS NOT SOUTH AFRICA AGAINST WHICH ZAIRE HAD THREATENED TO DECLARE WAR.

8. I MADE CLEAR OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE PRECEDENT OF THE USE OF SOVIET POWER IN SUPPORT OF A MINORITY GROUP IN ANY COUNTRY AND THE OBVIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR
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OTHER COUNTRIES WHO MAY AT SOME TIME BE VULNERABLE TO JUST SUCH AN INTERVENTION. MINIC DUCKED THAT THRUST AND RESPONDED THAT IT LOOKED LIKE THE PROBLEM IN ANGOLA WAS ON THE WAY TO BEING SOLVED. I RESPONDED THAT IT DEPENDED HOW EFFICIENT THE SOVIETS AND THEIR PUPPETS THE CUBANS WERE AT KILLING ANGOLANS. HE RETORTED THAT THAT WAS A BRUTAL WAY OF PUTTING THE MATTER AND I RESPONDED THE SOVIETS WERE PURSUING A BRUTAL POLICY.

9. I GAVE THE SECRETARY A CURSORY EXPLANATION OF MY ILO MISSION AS A COURTESY BUT DECLINED TO BE DRAWN INTO A LENGTHY SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION. I TOLD HIM THAT MY INSTRUCTION WERE TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH OUR ALLIES INITIALLY BUT THAT I WOULD BE PREPARED AT A SUBSEQUENT TIME TO DISCUSS IT WITH HIM. THE MEETING CLOSED WITH MY EXPRESSION APPRECIATION FOR THE COURTESY AFFORDED CODEL MORGAN AND MY INDICATION THAT THE MEETINGS HAD INDEED GONE QUITE WELL WHICH MINIC OBVIOUSLY APPRECIATED.

10. COMMENT: MY PERSONAL AND SUBJECTIVE IMPRESSION

IS THAT MINIC WAS NOT RPT NOT TELLING THE TRUTH
CONCERNING SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS. IT MAY BE POSSIBLE
THEY DID NOT KNOW THE PLANES IN QUESTION WERE
MILITARY AND WERE DESTINED FOR ANGOLA. BUT BY
INDICATING THEY DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENTLY SOPHISTICATED
EQUIPMENT TO DRAW THE CONCLUSIONS WE DO, HE HAS
CONSTRUCTED A RESPONSE TO OUR NOTE WHICH AVOIDS
JOINING THE ISSUE. HOWEVER, THE WAY HE HANDLED HIMSELF
IN THE DISCUSSION, THE EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE, AND THE
TONE OF HIS VOICE AND THE MANNER IN WHICH HE SWITCHED
INTO A DISCUSSION ON THE UNDERLYING MERITS OF THE
ANGOLAN QUESTION LEAD ME TO BELIEVE THAT THEY DID
IN FACT HAVE UNOFFICIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE NATURE AND
PURPOSE OF THE OVERFLIGHTS. I DARESAY THAT BY MY
DEMEANOR AND TONE I INDICATED DUBIETY.
SILBERMAN UNQUOTE
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CAT-C, NO HARD COPY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE022523
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: S/S:FORTIZ:AL
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: N760001-0647
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976018/aaaaagjn.tel
Line Count: 239
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <01 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY MINIC
TAGS: MASS, PFOR, OGEN, YO, UR, AO
To: MOSCOW
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006